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# San Diego City Attorney **CASEY GWINN**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 28, 2001**

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## **THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO HITS A GRAND SLAM IN COURT** *Judge's ruling paves way for issuing of bonds to build ballpark*

The City of San Diego walked out of the last crucial courtroom battle victorious in its fight to build the downtown ballpark. This afternoon, Superior Court Judge Judith McConnell ruled that the City Council acted lawfully when it voted, in March of this year, to ratify 28 contracts related to the ballpark project. This case is the final major legal hurdle standing in the way of the City's ability to issue the bonds necessary to finance its portion of the ballpark construction costs.

"All the lawsuits and all the delay tactics by opponents of the voter approved Ballpark Redevelopment Project have finally come to an unsuccessful end," said San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn. "We are now poised to make the ultimate decision to issue the bonds by early September and construction could be underway by the first of October," said Gwinn.

Construction on the ballpark came to a halt in 2000, after a series of lawsuits filed by Bruce Henderson and others stalled the City's ability to issue bonds for the project. In one case, Henderson alleged that Council member Valerie Stallings' conflicts of interest involving Padres owner John Moores corrupted her own votes, and voided the entire Council's votes, on several ballpark-related contracts. Stallings pled guilty to two lesser charges and resigned from office early this year. After her resignation, the new Council took action to ratify the previous Council's approval of those contracts. The City then filed this action, asking the court to find that the new Council's ratification action was valid, effectively nullifying any problems Stallings' conflicts might have caused with the legality of the contracts.

"We took this action so that everyone would know, as quickly as possible, that the City had valid contracts that would support the financing for the ballpark. By filing the action immediately after the Council

ratified the contracts, we avoided further delays that might have been caused by another Henderson lawsuit,” said San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn. “The opponents can try to file anything else they want, but this was the final decision we needed to pave the way for issuing bonds in the Fall,” said Gwinn.

With this judgment in its favor, the City hopes to be able to issue its bonds as early as the end of September. The ballpark is anticipated to be completed in 2003.

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